

*From the Writer,*  
*Graham (D.)*

THE

HISTORY OF MASSAGE.

*Box 94*

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## THE HISTORY OF MASSAGE.

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IN almost every city of the United States, and, indeed, of the whole civilized world, there may be found individuals claiming mysterious and magical powers of curing disease, setting bones, and relieving pain by the immediate application of their hands. Some of these boldly assert that their art is a gift from Heaven, due to some unknown power which they call magnetism ; others designate it by some peculiar word ending with pathy or cure, and it is often astonishing how much credit they get for their supposed genius by the most learned people of the land outside of the medical profession. History informs us that rubbing, kneading, percussion, passive and resistive movements have been partly used, in some form or other, among savage and civilized nations, from the most ancient times. To express these various manœuvres collectively, nearly all physicians who take any interest in the matter, foreign as well as American, seem satisfied with the French word *massage*, from the Greek *masso*, I knead or handle. But so little attention has this subject received, that Prof. Billroth, of Vienna, in 1875, and Dr. Wagner, of Friedberg, in 1876, stated that there were many physicians in Germany who had never heard of massage, and that it was



then an every-day question as to what it meant, some even supposing that Dr. Mezger, of Amsterdam, was the originator of it.\* Therefore, it is no wonder that when an article appears on the subject it often gets the credit of being original by many who read it, but overlook the fact expressed so well in the words of Hippocrates, that "Medicine hath of old both a principle and a discovered track, whereby in a long time many and fine discoveries have been discovered, and the rest will be discovered, if any one who is competent and knows what hath been discovered, start from these data on the search. But whoever, rejecting these, and despising all, shall undertake to search by a different track and in a different manner, and shall say that he hath discovered something, will be deceived himself and will deceive others." It is nothing unusual to see clear-headed individuals, uneducated as well as those of extensive learning, evolve from their inner consciousness, so to speak, something or other to meet the exigencies of a case, and then announce the same as a new discovery, when it had been put to similar purposes many times before. Such geniuses, if truly ignorant that their device had never before been heard of, deserve equally as great credit as the original inventors; but what very often detracts from the merits of their case is the fact that they did not stop to inquire whether any one else had ever used the same methods or not. On the other hand, it is not always the one making use of something novel who claims originality, but frequently those who are not so well informed on the subject as he is

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\* *Vide* Wiener med. Wochenschrift, No. 45, 1875; Berliner klin. Woch., Nov. 6 and 13, 1876.

who claim it for him. In the latter category almost every one has been delighted to find himself placed at some time or other, without any such intention on his part; and it is sometimes an agreeable excuse to let it pass, on the ground that it would not be dignified to inform the admirers of their ignorance. These remarks apply to massage and its advocates, as well as to other matters pertaining to medicine.

The earliest definite information concerning massage appears at about the beginning of the fourth century B.C., in the works of the great Greek physician, the Father of Medicine, Hippocrates. Though his notions, like those of the other ancients, were vague and incorrect with regard to the circulation of the blood (the important discovery of which by Harvey not taking place until more than 2,000 years later, A.D. 1628), yet he used rubbing in accordance with scientific principles, in such a way as to aid and not retard the circulation, as is shown by the word with which he defined the process, viz., *anatripsis*—literally, the art of rubbing up, not down. In this way, doubtless, he had had experience in promoting resorption of effusions, as it is now well known that rubbing the limbs upward favors the return of the circulation, relieves blood-stasis, and makes room in the veins and lymphatics for the more speedy passage of morbid products. After the acute stage of an injury had elapsed Hippocrates applied massage, as we learn from the following words: "The physician must be experienced in many things, but assuredly also in *anatripsis*; for things that have the same name have not always the same effects. For rubbing can bind a joint that is too loose, and loosen a joint that is too rigid, and the joint must be moved about,"

etc.\* Paradoxical as this may seem, yet I have witnessed the verification of it in two cases occurring in my own practice. They have already been reported in the New York MEDICAL RECORD for Aug. 11, 1877. The rationale of this statement, however, is not so paradoxical; for by appropriate rubbing, kneading, and passive motion, atrophied muscles, tendons, and ligaments would have their circulation accelerated and increased, and thus their nutrition and innervation improved so that they would grow larger and firmer, and, as a natural consequence, a joint too lax from such causes would become stronger. In the other case, by the same means, involuntary tension of muscles, adhesions, effusions, and hyperplastic tissue may be removed, and thus a joint stiff from such causes be made suppler.

Furthermore, says old Hippocrates in his aphorisms: "Anatripsis can bind and loosen; can make flesh and cause parts to waste. Hard rubbing binds; soft rubbing loosens; much rubbing causes parts to waste; moderate rubbing makes them grow." These words seem like revelation to any one who has had much experience in massage, and the literal fulfilment of them may be observed when the necessary previous conditions exist. Hard and soft, much and moderate are, of course, to be taken in a relative sense; for, what might be hard to one person might seem gentle to another.

Vigorous massage, as we might expect, makes soft and flabby muscles firmer. Gentle or moderate rubbing and manipulating loosens not only the abnormally tough and *matted* condition of the skin and super-

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\* Hippocrates, Peri Arthron. Littré, vol. iv., p. 100.



ficial fascia, but also the involuntary tenseness of the muscles, which, if looked for, may often be found not merely locally, but generally, in overtaxed and debilitated people. Such a state of these tissues would often seem to be a physical indication of too great mental tension, which the patient, like his muscles, is unable to relax. And here comes the necessity of a careful discrimination, which Hippocrates evidently appreciated, in using massage; for, if a patient in the condition described should receive such vigorous rubbing and kneading, as is so much advocated nowadays, and which would even seem to be necessary to relax such tissues, his condition would in all probability be aggravated, for reflex action, and consequently still greater tension, would be excited by the pressure of rough friction and manipulation upon terminal nerve-filaments which are already in a state of irritation. An admirable preliminary measure to the use of massage in such cases is the warm bath, for it is grateful and soothing to the patient, solicits the blood to the surface, softens the cuticle, and removes the epithelial débris, as well as relaxes the skin, and to some extent the tissues beneath it.

“Much rubbing causes parts to waste.” I have seen people who had a normal quantity of adipose tissue lose much of it, to their detriment, from the excessive use of massage. But even this feature can sometimes be utilized to advantage in cases where fat is superabundant, soft, and flabby, with a want of tone and tension in the areolar tissue. It is well known that tissues, when subjected to great and constant pressure, become attenuated and absorbed; but when acted upon by a less constant and slighter de-

gree of pressure, they increase in thickness. "Moderate rubbing makes parts grow." This implies that the tissues to be rubbed are insufficiently nourished; and moreover, that if they be immoderately rubbed, their vitality will be lessened, their nervous irritability exhausted, and a state of congestion induced highly unfavorable to their proper nourishment.

The ancients entertained sensible views with regard to the maintenance of health. "Not only Hippocrates, but all the physicians and philosophers of that period, knew no better means of strengthening the vital principle and prolonging life than by moderation; the use of free and pure air, bathing, and, above all, by daily friction of the body and exercise. Rules and directions were laid down for giving violent and gentle motion to the body in a variety of ways—hence arose a particular art called the gymnastic; and the greatest philosophers and men of learning never forgot that the body and the soul ought to be exercised in due proportion. This art, to us almost unknown, of suiting exercise to the different constitutions, situations, and wants of man; of employing it, above all, as the means of keeping his internal nature in proper activity, and thereby rendering the causes of disease ineffectual, but also curing diseases which have already appeared, they, indeed, brought to an extraordinary degree of perfection." The gymnastics were divided into athletic, military, and medical. Herodicus of Selivria first proposed gymnastics for the cure of disease; and to such an extent, we are told, did he carry his ideas, that he compelled his patients to exercise and to suffer their bodies to be rubbed; and he had the good fortune to lengthen for several years by this method the lives of so many en-

feebled persons, that Plato reproached him for prolonging that existence of which they would have less and less enjoyment.

Nowhere, perhaps, does the wisdom of the ancients appear more strikingly full of truth and meaning than in some of their remarks about massage. The distinguished Roman physician, Celsus, who flourished at the beginning of the Christian era, said that "rubbing should sometimes be applied to the whole body, as when an invalid requires his system to be replenished." "As rubbing is rightly applied after the cessation of an illness, so it must never be used during the increment of a fever, but, if possible, when the body shall have been wholly free from it." . . . . "A paralyzed limb is strengthened by being rubbed. If certain limbs only are rubbed, long and powerful rubbing may be used, for the whole body cannot soon be weakened through a part. But when weakness of the body needs this cure over its whole extent, it ought to be shorter and more gentle. . . . . Chronic pains of the head are relieved by rubbing the head itself. But far more frequently, when one part is in pain another must be rubbed, and particularly when we desire to *draw matter* from the upper or middle part of the body, and therefore rub the extremities." This is not the place to illustrate these remarks with cases treated with the modern methods of massage, though it could easily be done. However, proceeding onward with the march of time we find that one hundred years later history furnishes a good example of the truth of the first two observations here quoted from Celsus. The health of the celebrated Roman advocate, Pliny, which was never very strong, had been shaken by a severe illness the pre-

ceding year, A.D. 102. His life, he tells the emperor in one of his letters, had been in danger. He availed himself of a mode of treatment which it is presumed was much in vogue at that time. He procured the services of a medical practitioner who cured many of his patients by the process of rubbing and anointing. So much benefit did he derive from the remedy, that he asked the emperor to grant the physician, who was either a Jew or a Greek, the freedom of the city and the privilege of Roman citizenship. Cicero considered that he owed as much of his health to his anointer as he did to his physician.

In ancient times rubbing and anointing were much used in connection with the baths, the buildings for which were of great magnificence and luxury during the Roman empire, as their immense ruins yet existing testify. The Roman emperor Hadrian, seeing a veteran soldier one day rubbing himself against the marble at the public baths, asked him why he did so. The veteran answered, "I have no slave to rub me;" whereupon the emperor gave him two slaves and sufficient to maintain them. Another day several old men rubbed themselves against the wall in the emperor's presence, hoping for similar good fortune, when the shrewd Hadrian, perceiving their object, directed them to rub one another!

Martial (A.D. 100) undoubtedly refers to some kind of massage in the following lines:

*"Percurrit agili corpus arte tractatrix.  
Manumque doctam spargit omnibus membris."*

Galen (A.D. 170) recommended friction in a great number of diseases, generally as auxiliary to other



means. At Pergamus he was appointed city physician to the school of gladiators. These were rubbed before and after their exercises and combats: before, in order to increase the elasticity and strength of their limbs; after, in order to stroke away the ecchymoses, relieve the pain of the bruises, and to rest and refresh them from their fatigue.

A great deal more might be said to show that the Greeks and Romans knew well the advantages of friction as a hygienic and as a therapeutic agent. But they were not the only members of the Aryan race who practised rubbing. Strabo states that the Indians contemporary with Alexander, 326 B.C., esteemed friction highly. "In the way of exercise," he says, "they think most highly of rubbing; and they polish their bodies smooth with ebony staves and in other ways." "There are public baths in India which are associated with the practice of shampooing. The bather is extended upon a plank, and a vigorous attendant pours hot water over him, presses and bends the various parts of his body, cracks all the joints, and continues the operation of pouring, pulling and pressing for about half an hour. He then rubs him briskly by means of a hair-brush with soap and perfumes, after which the subject is obliged by his fatigue to sleep a few hours, from which he awakes extremely refreshed. The women in India take a lively pleasure in being shampooed by their slaves; and Europeans, who enter upon the process with a sort of fear, describe the sensation which results as delightful and peculiar."

Much the same practices obtain among the Turks and Arabs. With the Russians flagellation and friction by means of a bundle of birch twigs are resorted to after the subject has been well parboiled in a vapor-

bath. A pailful of cold water is then dashed over him from head to foot, the effect of which is described as electrifying. After this he plunges into the snow, and thus tempers himself like steel to endure with impunity his rigorous climate. The Siberians and Laplanders also indulge in similar luxuries.

Having seen that massage has been practised after a fashion by the Greeks, the Romans, and the Hindoos, it is reasonable to suppose that it was also made use of by their common ancestors, the Aryans; so that its origin may well be spoken of as hoary with antiquity, or as some say, lost in the night of time. It may not be amiss, just here, to let history tell us who the Aryans were, and where their original place of abode was. The Aryan branch of the Caucasian race includes nearly all the past and present nations of Europe, and is that division to which we ourselves belong. The Aryans are described as being a fair-skinned, noble people, progressive, practical, and war-like, and it is said that they speedily subdued the country adjacent to them, and also the peninsula of India, 3000 years B.C. The original seat of the undivided Aryan stock was to the north-east of Persia, in the region of the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers. The water of the Oxus is said to have been extremely soft, so as to have made the skin of those who bathed in it glisten. Now, we can imagine that from the pleasant sensation of drawing the hand over the skin in admiration of the effect of the water of the Oxus upon it, may have arisen the practice of systematic friction among the Aryans.

So much for the history of massage in what might be called its period of invention. We will now briefly glance at what might be styled its period of renewal,

in the sixteenth century, as but little of interest can be found worth mentioning till that time. Ambrose Paré,\* in his works, which were published in 1575, states that friction was in great esteem in his time. He describes three kinds of frictions, the gentle, the medium, and the rough, and the effects of each. In dislocations he recommends that the joint should be moved about this and that way—not violently—in order to resolve the effused fluids and extend the fibres of the muscles and of the ligaments, so as to facilitate the reduction. From this it is apparent that he knew the influence of passive motion in promoting absorption, the rationale of which has been so well studied of late by German physiologists.

Hoffman, in his *Dissertationes Physico-Medicæ*, 1708, says “that exercise is the best medicine for the body.” (It is not always applicable, however.) “We cannot imagine,” he adds, “how much it is salutary and favorable to health; corporeal exercise excites the flow of the spirits and facilitates the excretions from the blood.” He describes the passive, active, and mixed movements of the ancients, as well as the *apotherapeia* or perfect cure, meaning the last part of the ancient gymnastics, which consisted of friction, inunction, and bathing, for the purpose of obviating fatigue and curing disease.

Alpinus, in his *Medicina Egyptia*, says that frictions are so extensively used among the Egyptians that no one retires from a bath without being rubbed. “For this purpose the person is extended, then he is malaxated (manipulated, kneaded) and pressed in

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\* It is narrated of Ambrose Paré, the most renowned surgeon of the sixteenth century, that when a young man he hired with a noble family to do the shaving, the surgery, and to read the family prayers.

divers manners upon the various parts of his body. Passive motion is then given to the different articulations. They are not satisfied with *masséeing*, flexing, and extending the articulations alone; they exercise the same pressures and the same frictions upon all the muscles." The effect of which is thus described by M. Savary: "Perfectly *masséed*, one feels completely regenerated, a feeling of extreme comfort pervades the whole system, the chest expands and we breathe with pleasure, the blood circulates with ease, and we have a sensation as if freed from an enormous load; we experience a suppleness and lightness till then unknown. It seems as if we had just been born, and as if we truly lived for the first time. There is a lively feeling of existence which radiates to the extremities of the body, whilst this is given over to the most delightful sensations; the mind takes cognizance of these and enjoys the most agreeable thoughts; the imagination wanders over the universe which it adorns, sees everywhere smiling pictures, everywhere the image of happiness. If life were only a succession of ideas, the rapidity with which memory retraces them, the vigor with which the mind runs over the extended chain of them, would make one believe that in the two hours of delicious calm which follows we live a great many years."

Shakespeare has not forgotten to mention rubbing and kneading:

IAGO.—My lord has fallen into an epilepsy;  
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

CASSIO.—Rub him about the temples.

IAGO.—No, forbear;  
The lethargy must have his quiet course.

OTHELLO, iv. 1.

AJAX.—I'll knead him; I'll make him supple.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, ii. 3.



These lines indicate the empirical and the rational use of massage, though the latter was employed in a figurative sense.

The third historical division of massage, or what is found recorded about it in more recent times, has been styled its period of improvement. To Peter Henrik Ling, of Sweden, is given the credit of having instituted, in 1813, what is so well known as the "Swedish Movement Cure." Some even regard him as the inventor of this system of treating certain diseases, while others consider that he only made rational that which had been in practice for many centuries among the Chinese and other eastern nations. The latter is the more correct view, and the one which Ling himself doubtless held; for Dr. Roth, a disciple of his, states that Ling thought not, like his predecessors, of merely imitating the gymnastic treatment of the ancients, but he aimed at its reformation and improvement. From the following remarks of M. Georgii, one of Ling's pupils, it has been thought by M. Estradère (Du Massage, 1863) that Ling claimed to have invented the movement and manipulation treatment of disease. "Let us speak of the series of movements invented and determined by Ling. Here the influence comes solely from without, and the patient submits to the mechanical impression. Ling means by passive movements all communicated movements, such as pressures, frictions, percussions, *froissement* (manipulation of the skin and subcutaneous cellular tissue), etc., motions and attitudes suitable to produce temporary or artificial congestion in an organ." Hereafter Estradère disputes somewhat bitterly the honor thus given to Ling, and adduces abundant and interesting testimony to show that "Ling's entire sys-

tem was but a compilation of all the exercises, frictions, and manipulations which had been practised before him among many nations. The method of Ling is that of the Brahmins of India; it is that of the Egyptian priests; it is that of Asclepiades, of Pythagoras and of Herodicus, one of the masters of Hippocrates; it is that of which Hippocrates, Celsus, Galen, Rufus of Ephesus, and other physicians, Greek and Roman, have preserved fragments for us. All the movements which Ling has indicated are described in the *Cong-Fou* of the *Tao-Ssé*." However the genius of Ling, and the claims of priority made for him, may have been disputed, there seems to be no doubt as to the merits of the system which he rescued from oblivion, and to all accounts put upon a scientific basis. "In the rooms of the central establishment at Stockholm persons of every condition and age, the healthy as well as the sick, executed or were subject to the prescribed movements. The number of those who adopted the use of the therapeutic movements increased every year, and among them were even physicians who, in the beginning, had been the most opposed to Ling." In 1844 the Supreme Medical Board of Russia appointed two members of the Medical Council to inquire into the merits of the movement and manipulation treatment as practised by M. de Ron, one of Ling's disciples, at St. Petersburg. He had then been using it there for a period of twelve years, and from the highly commendatory report of the Councillors we quote the following:

"All passive movements (those which are executed by an external agent upon the patient), as well as active ones (produced by the effort of the voluntary muscles), and the different positions, with the aid of

apparatus or without it, are practised according to a strictly defined method, and conducted rationally, since they are based upon mechanical as well as anatomical and physiological principles. *Experience teaches us the usefulness of the institution, as many persons thus treated have recovered their health after having suffered from diseases which could not be cured by the ordinary remedies.* We must also mention the testimony of Dr. Bogoslawsky, who himself, after having been cured in that institution of a chronic disease, has practised diligently these movements (including friction, manipulation, etc.), and who, being appointed consulting physician to that institution, has since then had opportunities enough of observing and witnessing numerous cures.” \*

In Sir John Sinclair's Code of Health and Longevity we are told that Admiral Henry cured himself of rheumatism by means of friction and percussion with instruments made of bone polished smooth, cork hammers, and the bottom ends of glass vials. He was at that time, 1810, seventy-nine years of age, and had suffered from rheumatism for twenty-eight years. There were swellings in his knees, ankles, and insteps which made him quite a cripple, so that he could only crawl about. He persevered in the frictions and percussions night and morning for three years, at the end of which, it is said, he had completely succeeded in removing the swellings, and had restored himself to the use of his limbs. The fingers of one hand were swollen and contracted, it was thought from gout, but by the persistent use of his instruments they became quite flexible. Many of these operations of deep

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\* Roth on the Cure of Chronic Diseases, pp. 18 and 19.

rubbing and percussing the admiral described as being at first painful; but they ceased to be so after having been persevered in for a little while, and became even pleasant and so useful that, after having gone through with them in the morning, he felt better all day. "If regularly done for some time," says the admiral, "the muscles become so sound and firm that neither pinching nor beating with violence gives any pain, while with the improvement of the frame the mind becomes stronger, the spirits improve, and the faculties are strengthened."

In 1782 a cataract began to form in Admiral Henry's left eye. He was accidentally led to try rubbing in a peculiar way, with the result, it is stated, that in less than two years the cataract was dispersed. Two years later a cataract came in his right eye, and this he was persuaded to have removed more quickly than the other had been. It was operated upon by a distinguished oculist of London, in 1799, and he lost the sight of it, so that, had it not been for the successful dispersion of the cataract in the left eye, the admiral was sure he would have been entirely blind.\*

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\* Other cases of a similar kind might be quoted, but it must not be forgotten that cataracts sometimes improve for a time, and they have even been known to disappear of their own accord. Dr. Pagenstecher, of Wiesbaden, a trustworthy oculist, has used massage in two cases of episcleritis, and one of parenchymatous keratitis, with "such favorable results that he no longer hesitates to report them." Of the rapidity of improvement, he says he has "never observed the like with other methods of treatment;" and, however his further attempts may turn out, "still the significant fact remains that one can by means of massage diminish the intraocular pressure in suitable cases."—*Centralblatt für Prak. Augenheilkunde*, Dec., 1878.

I have used massage of the head and locally with marked and permanent improvement in three cases of muscular asthenopia: one a myopic patient, one a hypermetropic—both of whom had had their refra-



After the cataract operation the admiral suffered from excruciating facial neuralgia for a year, which reduced him to a state of great weakness. Having used various remedies with but temporary relief, he then tried deep rubbing with his instruments, and thus, it is said, completely removed the complaint. He kept up his frictions and percussion as a means of preserving his health, and the result was that at the age of ninety-one he enjoyed the activity of middle life, and had attained to as good a state of health as any man in England. In a letter to a friend, dated March 1, 1823, he writes: "I never was better, and at present am likely to continue so. I step up and down stairs with an ease which surprises myself. My digestion is excellent, and every food agrees with me. I can walk three miles without stopping."

The admiral's system of massage was rather rough, and probably nothing would have inspired him with such perseverance but the enthusiasm arising from the firm belief that he had discovered and invented a new system of treatment. What he observed with regard to his procedures being at first painful, but subse-

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tion long before attended to—and one an emmetropic patient. This is not the place to speak of the tangible changes which occurred in the accessible tissues, and which coincided with, or even preceded improvement in these cases: nor is there room to speak of the manner of using the massage, which was not by superficial friction, as is generally supposed. Nor yet is there space to discuss the rationale: but it may be pardonable to suggest that if there may and does arise a dozen different affections of the eye from cold, exciting a neuralgia of the infra- or supra-orbital nerve (see *Arch. de Médecine*, July, Sept., and Nov., 1854, and Brown-Séquard's *Lectures on Functional Nervous Disorders*, 1868), why is it not reasonable to expect improvement in as many maladies of the eye from the use of massage, which acts in a reverse manner from cold, but through the medium of the same tissues—provided the affection is not beyond recovery?

D. G.

quently becoming agreeable, is very true, and has been often noticed by others in a variety of cases more recently, some even intimating that in this they have made an observation hitherto unknown. It is difficult for some people to imagine that *matted*, rigid, and painful tissues can become of natural suppleness, elasticity and feeling, under the use of massage; as well as the fact that flabby, over-sensitive tissues deficient in size, tone and firmness can often be made, by means of massage, to assimilate the nourishment necessary to their proper formation. On this subject let old Celsus again speak. "For a thing becomes constricted when we take away that which by its interposition produced relaxation, and softened when we remove that which caused its hardness, and filled, not by the rubbing, but by the food which afterward penetrates to the skin which has been relaxed by a kind of digestion or removal of its tissue."

A curious old book is that entitled: "A Full Account of the System of Friction, as adopted and pursued with the greatest Success in Cases of Contracted Joints and Lameness from various Causes, by the late eminent Surgeon, John Grosvenor, Esq., of Oxford." About a century ago Dr. Grosvenor was professor of surgery for many years at Oxford. His skill and reputation became so great that he was soon in possession of all the surgical practice at Oxford, and on every side of it within a radius of thirty miles. "He practised simply as a surgeon, in the proper and strict sense of the word; and while he never condescended to soil his fingers with the preparations of pharmacy, he constantly refused at the same time to invade the province of the physician. In the latter period of his practice, Mr. Grosvenor rendered himself justly cele-

brated throughout the kingdom by the application of friction to lameness or imperfections of motion arising from stiff or diseased joints. He had first used it with success in a complaint of his own, a morbid affection of the knee; and by degrees its efficacy was so acknowledged that he was visited by patients from the most distant parts, of the highest rank and respectability—among others, by Mr. Hey, the able surgeon of Leeds. Those who have benefited by the process pursued under his own immediate superintendence in cases of this sort, and from total inability have been restored to a free use of their limbs, are best able to attest his merits. That he was scarcely in any instance known to fail was perhaps attributable to the circumstance that he used his utmost efforts to dissuade from coming to Oxford to try the experiment every one of whose case, from previous communications, he entertained any doubt. Possessed at this time of affluence, he became very indifferent about business, and, at a time of life when he was still capable of active exertions and his strength was but little impaired, he began to contract his practice. For the last ten years of his life he had wholly given up his profession, except in the instances of his rubbing patients.”

It may be worth while to mention the cases in which Mr. Grosvenor found massage most serviceable, inasmuch as its value in similar cases has since been confirmed by others. “First, contractions of the joints, unattended with inflammatory symptoms, proceeding from cold, dampness, or rheumatism, attended with languid circulation, and thickening of the ligaments. Secondly, in those cases where there is too great secretion of the synovial fluid, particularly in the knee-joint

Thirdly, after wounds in ligamentous, tendinous or muscular parts, where the function of the limb or part is impaired; but here it should not be made use of till the inflammation and tenderness have subsided. Fourthly, in cases of paralysis. Fifthly, those of chorea, combined with attention to the system. Sixthly, Violent strains of joints, when the inflammatory symptoms have entirely subsided.\* Seventhly, in incipient cases of white swelling this is almost the only remedy that has been found effectual, and it has frequently happened that joints absolutely condemned to the knife, and on the point of being amputated, have been saved and their use restored by this method. After fractures of the articulating extremities of the joints, as when the bones are united, a stiffness generally remains. In all the various dislocations of the joints, when the motion of the joint is left impaired, after the inflammation has subsided. After ruptures of tendinous or ligamentous parts, provided they are firmly united."

Another "quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore," is that of "Illustrations of the Power of Com-

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\* Inflammation does not, by any means, contraindicate the use of massage in such cases, for, in the words of Berghmann and Helleday, "*massage will simultaneously further and increase resorption, accelerate the circulation, relieve pain, and reduce elevated temperature.*" If any one wants to look into this matter, they will find in my report on the treatment of sprains by massage (in the New York MEDICAL RECORD, No. 353, 1877) the results of this method in 312 cases by ten different observers, independently of one another. Though the inflammatory symptoms in many of these cases were severe, yet the results of the use of massage in all showed that they recovered, or were cured, in one-third of the time required for similar cases treated in the usual methods alone. But no surgeon will believe this unless he has tried it for himself, or been treated in this manner for a sprain in one of his own joints.—D. G.



pression and Percussion in the Cure of Rheumatism, Gout and Debility of the Extremities, and in Promoting Health and Longevity. By Wm. Balfour, M.D., Edinburgh, 1819." Dr. Balfour claimed for himself the originality accredited to Dr. Grosvenor by his friends, viz., that of discovering a new method of treatment, without inquiring if there were any previous data to start from. This fact, however, makes their testimony all the more valuable and unbiassed, which we can doubtless trust, for they were eminent practitioners in their day, and any one who reads their books would certainly say honest as well. Dr. Balfour's book is mainly made up of reports of cases of rheumatism, gout, neuralgia, sprains, and the results of injuries treated by means of percussion, deep rubbing, and firm compression with bandages. The cases are well reported, and are interspersed with forcible and philosophical remarks. Those who revived tight strapping in sprains a few years ago would have done well to have first looked into old Balfour. The following from the introductory chapter is a specimen of how the doctor regarded those of his professional brethren who did not adopt his views so readily as he thought they should have done. "Medical practitioners encourage their patients in giving perfect rest to parts affected with rheumatism and gout, till, as often happens in the latter disease, the vessels change their actions altogether. It is incumbent on such practitioners to show that there is greater security to life in painful, rigid, and swollen limbs, and in frequent and long confinement, than in the free and equable circulation of the blood through every part of the body and in exercise in the open air. It is incumbent on them to show that life is

more secure when the functions of the body are imperfectly than when duly performed. . . . It was observed by Lord Bacon that knowledge more quickly springs from absolute ignorance than from error. It is much easier, surely, to instruct the ignorant than to convince the prejudiced. But, in spite of the hostility that has been shown to the practice illustrated in the following pages, I have the satisfaction to see it adopted at last by physicians of the first eminence.\* It may with truth be affirmed that there never was an important improvement made in the practice of medicine yet but what met with opposition. Mercury, bark, cold affusions in fever, vaccination, all experienced it. Nay, Harvey himself lost his practice on account of discovering the circulation of the blood."

From his own extensive general practice, Dr. Balfour selected cases for his new method of treatment. Many of these, from a state of chronic invalidism, improved rapidly and got well, and there were but few who did not receive some benefit. His remarks on the effects of percussion have not yet been excelled; nothing in the recent German reports on massage equals them. Says he: "Whoever has the slightest acquaintance with natural philosophy and chemistry knows that percussion produces wonderful effects on inanimate bodies. A mason will cut a stone of immense thickness perpendicularly through by a few strokes of a hammer. A few strokes of a hammer will drive home a nail on which an immense weight gradually applied would have little or no effect. A smith's anvil may be made hot by continued and forcible hammering. Is it surprising,

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\* *Vide* Transactions of the College of Physicians, Dublin, vol. i.

then, that a power which produces such wonderful effects on inanimate matter should exert a powerful influence on the living body? If I apply percussion in the course of the sciatic nerve of a person laboring under sciatic rheumatism, a pleasurable vibration will be communicated through the whole limb, the nervous power being thereby diffused. If I apply percussion to a paralyzed limb, I thereby attract to it the nervous energy. If I apply percussion to limbs debilitated by rheumatism, gout, or old age, I thereby excite the action of the vessels and nerves, promote the circulation, and restore that heat of which they are deprived through inactivity and the weakness of the powers of life.”\*

A paragraph from Estradère will indicate sufficiently the state of massage in France in 1863, and, so far as I can learn, at the present time also: “Although numerous observations upon the benefits of massage in certain affections have been communicated to the Academy of Sciences and other learned societies; although some physicians became alarmed at the enormous practice of an empiric, Moltenot, who *masséed* at Orleans in 1833, and entreated the Court of Justice for a sentence against him; although Récamier and his pupils, Séguin and Maisonneuve, had lectured upon massage before all the learned societies; although in these times the most distinguished physi-

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\* Percussion can be performed in half a dozen different ways with the hands and fingers, varying in force and rapidity. I have recently had two india-rubber air-balls, securely fastened on the ends of whalebone handles, for this purpose. Balls 2 in. diameter, and handles 11 in. long, are most suitable. They work most admirably, as one gets the spring of the whalebone with the rebound of the balls, thus gaining great rapidity of motion, with easily varying intensity. It takes considerable practice to become expert in using them.

cians of Paris very often prescribe massage; yet, for all that, it is still under the domain of empiricism, because physicians are content with indicating its therapeutical results, without interrogating anatomy and physiology for the reasons of these results. Nevertheless, this age has a tendency toward improvement in this matter, and already the physiologists have given some satisfactory explanations of the effects of massage, passive and mixed movements."

About seven years ago Dr. Mezger, of Amsterdam, treated the then Danish crown prince successfully for a chronic joint malady by means of massage, which he used in a manner original to himself, and in accordance with the teachings of physiology and pathological anatomy. When the prince got well he sent a young physician to Amsterdam to study Dr. Mezger's method of applying it, and soon after many old as well as young physicians visited the clinic of Mezger, and they all agreed that the so-called massage, used in Mezger's manner and according to the indications which a very large experience has enabled him to point out, is a most worthy agent in various affections of the joints, besides in inflammations and neuroses. They consider that credit is due to Mezger for having improved massage in a physiological manner, and for having brought it to be acknowledged as a highly valuable method.

A few extracts from the very excellent and comprehensive report on massage, in *Schmidt's Jahrbücher*, Vol. 166, 1875, will show the estimation in which it is held by some of the first German physicians. The reporter begins by saying that "it is but recently that massage has gained an extensive scientific consideration, for it has passed out of the hands of rough

empirics into those of scientific, cultivated physicians; and, upon the ground of the results of recent scientific investigation, it has been cultivated into an improved therapeutical system. The Danish physician, Mezger, has won the merit of having made massage in its entirety a special branch of the art of medicine." Then follows a list of forty articles on massage, by a score of authors, mostly Scandinavian, only one being American. The manner of using massage and its physiological action are next described; and, after this, the results of massage in similar cases, treated by different authors, are grouped together and compared—so many cured, so many benefited, and so many not relieved. The report concludes by saying that, "if massage is to be of any use, it ought to be applied by those who are absolutely physicians; for the brilliant results which have just been cited depended upon an exact knowledge of anatomy and physiology, and also upon recent progress in medical and surgical pathology, which enabled the operators to make an accurate diagnosis. A very important part of the qualifications necessary for the effectual performance of massage depends upon the physical qualities of the manipulators; they require strength of hands and fingers, endurance and elasticity, which every physician does not possess; and herein lies the danger that the practice of massage will pass into the hands of the laity, who, again, have not the other requisites, viz., medical knowledge." \*

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\* Prof. Von Mosengeil, of Bonn, speaking of massage, says: "Its value must be recognized: but it is not adapted for every-day use by every physician; nor will it be much used in hospitals, for lack of time. The best results will be obtained by the few who bring to its



It would not be doing justice to this brief historical sketch of massage to omit the description of *lomi-lomi* given by Nordhoff in his "Northern California, Oregon, and the Sandwich Islands," 1874. "Wherever you stop, for lunch or for the night, if there are native people near, you will be greatly refreshed by the application of *lomi-lomi*. Almost everywhere you will find some one skilled in this peculiar, and, to tired muscles, delightful and refreshing treatment. To be *lomi-lomied* you lie down upon a mat, or undress for the night, if you prefer. The less clothing you have on, the more perfectly the operation can be performed. To you thereupon comes a stout native with soft fleshy hands, but a strong grip, and beginning with your head and working down slowly over the whole body, seizes and squeezes with a quite peculiar art every tired muscle, working and kneading with indefatigable patience, until in half an hour, whereas you were weary and worn out, you find yourself fresh, all soreness and weariness absolutely and entirely gone, and mind and body soothed to a healthful and refreshing sleep. The *lomi-lomi* is used not only by the natives, but among almost all the foreign residents; and not merely to procure relief from weariness consequent on over-exertion, but to cure headaches, to relieve the aching of neuralgic or rheumatic pains, and by the luxurious as one of the pleasures of life. I have known it to relieve violent headache in a very short time. The chiefs used to keep skilful *lomi-lomi* men and women in their retinues; and the late king, who was for some years too stout to

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use abundance of time, patience, skill, and strength. Specialists, therefore, will probably get the most satisfactory results from it. (Arch. f. klin. Chirurg., XIX., 4, 1876.)—D. G.

take exercise, and was yet a gross feeder, had himself *lomi-lomied* after every meal as a means of helping his digestion. It is a device for relieving pain and weariness which seems to have no injurious reaction and no drawback but one—it is said to fatten the subjects of it.”

Though massage in some form or other is in all probability a primitive institution among all nations, yet the word skilful is not used amiss here by Nordhoff; for some people have a natural tact, with a peculiar quality of strength and structure of hands, which render them vastly superior as manipulators. Add to these the improvement acquired by long practice, and the enlightened experience which a medical education alone can lead to, and we have such a person to use massage as those only will appreciate who have had less favored manipulators apply it to them. It is a pity that there are not more epicures in this matter, who would willingly place the different operators in massage on their merits, irrespective of the policy of others in employing ignorant and incompetent rubbers. There are as great variations in hands for massage as there are in voices for singing. A person who has a naturally charming voice well cultivated is estimated very highly; a person who has by practice and education cultivated the use of a pair of hands excellently adapted for massage, probably never will be estimated so highly or rewarded so richly, but the efficient work which they can do is second to no other of a different kind, and it is as soothing, charming, and beneficial to many invalids as sweet music is to those who are harassed with the corroding cares of life.

“*Lomi-lomi* is said to fatten the subjects of it” (by stimulating the nutritive processes). This, with the

above remarks about the late king of the Sandwich Islands, might easily have furnished an indication to the purpose for which massage was used in the class of cases described in the very interesting little book entitled "Fat and Blood, and How to Make Them," which was not published until three years after Nordhoff's book—sufficient time to give the suggestion a trial. The author of "Fat and Blood," in the chapter on massage, says he has some facts to relate with regard to it which, he thinks, are not known on either side of the Atlantic. In view of this statement, these facts ought to be of great value. What are they? and what is the author's own estimate of them? Evidently they are the changes of temperature produced by massage. "These facts are, of course, extremely interesting," says Dr. Mitchell, "but it is well to observe that the success of the treatment is not indicated in any constant way by the thermal changes, which are neither so steady nor so remarkable as those caused by electricity." The reviewer of "Fat and Blood," in the *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*, January, 1878, attaches a great deal more importance to these changes than the author himself does; says he: "Although it has been noted by Trousseau that the increased warmth of the skin produced by massage is due to the more active cutaneous circulation, it was reserved to Dr. Mitchell to put this point on an exact scientific basis by a series of accurate thermometric observations." If the success of the treatment is not indicated by these changes, of what value are they as a scientific basis? It is not very clear that they have any relation to a scientific basis at all in the class of cases referred to, for, by the author's own confession, they may, to all intents and purposes, be disregarded so far as any utility is concerned.









